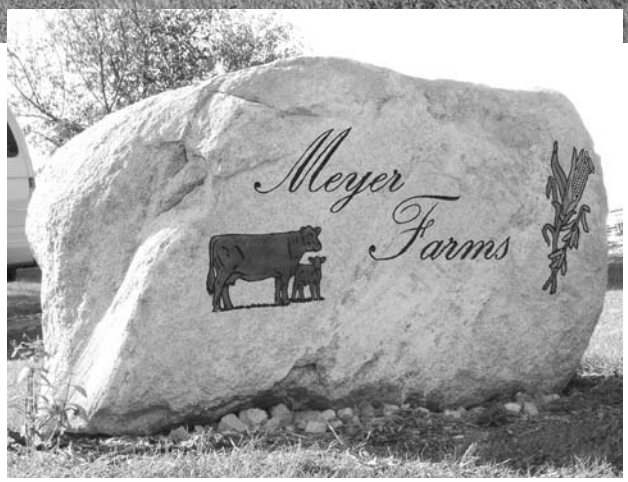
RIPCORD REPORT

For Friends and Survivors of the Battle of Fire Support Base Ripcord
Rupublic of Vietnam • 12 March – 23 July, 1970

Number 64 Fall, 2004

Ripcord Reunion '04



Down On The Meyer Farm

The Meyer's family served up great pork sandwiches with all the trimmings. Ewe even let us city slickers ride the big farm equipment he has. Seemed like Green Acres is the place to be!

FROM THE EDITOR

The 2004 Reunion in Des Moines was another great success. Thanks go out to Fred and the Association members that helped him.

The 2005 Reunion will be in Indianapolis, IN. from July 18 – 21, 2005. This reunion is also in the beginning of the week in order to get the best prices for the rooms. This will probably be the last reunion Fred Spaulding sets up and now it's time for others to take over the duties of organizing the events.

Looking even further ahead, the 2006 Reunion is planned for Charleston SC July 26 – 29, 2006 and will be Wednesday through Saturday. This is being handled by Charlie and Juanita Tipton who have graciously consented to give it a try.

As mentioned before, Fred has done an excellent job on setting up the reunions. No matter who takes over the task of setting up the reunions, there will always be a few complaints. It is not easy to please everyone. But the more input we have from the association members on where and when the reunions should be, it may make it a little easier. To keep the reunions a success, we need everyone's support. This is an important matter, I know some have already responded but please respond again. So please send your thoughts, opinions and suggestions (good or bad) and I will submit them to whoever intends to do the reunions.

Send e-mail it to:
frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com.

DONATIONS

Donations are very important! Donations pay for the printing and mailing of the newsletter. All checks should be made payable to **"Ripcord Association"**. Please send all donations to:

Fred Spaulding
7702 White Dove Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46256-1750

ARTICLES

DEADLINE for next issue: January 1, 2005

Please send all articles, photos, incoming mail, and interesting reading to:

Frank Marshall
224 Derry Hill Ct
Mt Laurel, NJ 08054-3709
e-mail: frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com

RIPCORD BIOGRAPHIES...THEN AND NOW

Please send us a brief bio on yourself to be included in the newsletter. Include which company you served with, the dates you were in the service, the dates you were in Vietnam, your rank, any interesting facts about your involvement with FSB Ripcord, what you did after Vietnam, career, family, and some comments of your choice. You may include a picture if desired. Send all information to:

Lee Widjeskog
493 Stillman Ave
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
e-mail: leewidjeskog@ripcordassociation.com

We need your E-mail address

Send us your e-mail address and receive all the updates and new information on The Ripcord Association immediately. We do not send junk mail, only important information and news. If you are not currently receiving updates, please send your e-mail address to:
frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com

Electronic Newsletter

A lot of members are receiving the newsletter via e-mail. If you have ***Adobe Acrobat Reader*** on your computer (most computers do) you can receive the newsletter by e-mail, just open it and read it, print it or save it. But, we must have your e-mail address to send it to you.

This saves the cost of postage and you receive the newsletter before anyone in the snail mail.

You can download ***Adobe Acrobat Reader*** **FREE** at:
www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

Ripcord Association Website

The Ripcord Association website is on line and very informative. You can check it out now at:

www.ripcordassociation.com

Check out the 2004 Ripcord Reunion photos on the website!

Donations

The following have sent donations since the last newsletter:

Bill and Sheila Williams, David Kreckel (In memory of brother John), Tony Cox, Lloyd and Dee Rahlf, Don Cabrol, John and Fumika Schuelke, Doc Harris, CSM Theodore M Reeves III, Jim and Roxanne Neff, Dave Snyder, Penny and Doc Cafferty (In memory of Lt Campbell's 50th Birthday), Leonard Moore, Jim and Joan King, Ron and Evelyn Janezic, Walt Lyssy, Joe and Patricia Guerra, Vince McNamarra, Calvin Smith, Floyd and Diane Alexander, Mike and Liz Womack, Dale Falconer, Charles F Schlueter, Donald Otto, George Stenehjem, James Kilgore, Frank Bort, Lydia and Dan Esposito, Mike and Cathy Chiarreli, Bill and Juanita Tipton, Chuck "Gary" Goulah.

RIPCORD REUNION ROUNDUP

by Fred Spaulding

Dear fellow "Ripcorders" and "Ripcordettes", another reunion is in the books and now it is time to prepare for the next one, which will be in Indianapolis in July, 2005. Details for this reunion will be in the next newsletters.

Major General Harrison (USA-RET), presented coins to the following people who attended a reunion for the first time. Mike Labbee, Richard Doyle, George Murphy, Robin Graham, Don Thies, Dennis Luckinbill, Ron Martin, Donald Otto, Gib Rosseter, David Grubb and Randy Burdette. A coin was also presented to David Kreckel, brother of John Kreckel, A2/506 KIA July 22, 1970.

George Murphy won the raffle for the next reunion registration fee. I don't know who won all the other items that were raffled off, but suffice to say, it was a good thing Gary Goulah drove his car and not his motorcycle. He won practically every time a number was called. (It seemed like it anyway).

Bob and Red Judd, Charlie and Juanita Tipton, along with all the "Ripcordettes", deserve a big round of applause and a great big thank you from all of us for all of the hard work and efforts they put into making the reunion a success. In case no one has noticed, it's the ladies raffles and the donations that the association receives that make the reunions a success.

I also want to thank Uwe and Diane Meyer for allowing us into their home and going through all that trouble, just so we could have a picnic. As to the traffic jam on the way back to the hotel, I am sorry but I can not control the highway repairs although, I sure wish I could. Sitting in traffic is definitely not any fun, but it is even worse for the drivers. A great big thank you to our four drivers. Tony Cox, Bob Judd, Tex Campbell and Sean Cox. It's people like these who "step up" when needed that also make the reunions the success that they are.

If I've left anyone off of the donations and /or Thank You lists, it was unintentional and I apologize. Thanks to everyone, especially for the lovely gifts for Micki and I. They're lovely, they're beautiful and they will have a place of honor in our home. Like I've said before, I haven't done anything to deserve all this. I appreciate it greatly, but there are so many others that are more deserving than I am. Besides, it embarrasses me. Thanks to all of you and thanks for everything. I will see you in July

P.S. Go Colts!

INCOMING MAIL

It was the July 4th 2004, weekend when I received a call from David Kreckel. His brother John Kreckel (Alpha Company, 2/506) was killed on July 22, 1970. David was only 8 years old when John was killed. David just read the book "Ripcord" and wanted to call and talk to somebody from Alpha Company that was with his brother that day. So he did some searching to find the phone numbers of the men who were mentioned in the book. After I talked to him, I called the guys from Alpha Company and after a couple days of making plans, we agreed to meet David in Washington, D.C at "The Wall".
On July 21, 22 and 23 Chuck Hawkins hosted at his home, a mini reunion for Alpha Company to meet with Dave Kreckel. People who could make this short notice gathering were Frank Marshall, Lee Widjeskog, Tom Swayne, Chuck Hawkins, Tommy Webster, James Hill, Joe Hasankulizide, Jay Wetherby and David Kreckel.

Frank Marshall

Here is the letter that David wrote us after the reunion in Wash. D.C.

On July 22, 1970, I lost my brother, John Kreckel, at a place called Fire Base Ripcord in South Vietnam. I was 8 years old the day the Olive Drab Sedan pulled up before my parents home. The lone man in the car burdened with the solemn task of telling my parents they'd lost a son. That day, the day I lost both my best friend and my big brother, was burned into my memory forever more.

For years I would wonder about the circumstances of his passing, and the people he served with at Ripcord. This past spring, entirely by chance, I learned of the existence of a book written by Keith Nolan that might provide some answers.

I've never read a book with such great interest as I did Ripcord. I can't thank Keith Nolan enough for writing it. Still, some questions lingered. At the back of the book were the names of some of the men who fought at Ripcord, with last known towns / cities of residence. I did some detective work.

My efforts led me to the mother of Frank Marshall. (Frank, I've told you this in person, but your mother is one of the sweetest women I've ever spoken to over the phone). That phone call led me to Frank Marshall, which led me to Robert Faddis and Lowell Webster as well. I'd made contact with men that actually knew my brother in 'Nam. Amazing!

Frank Marshall invited me to join him and several other Ripcord Veterans at a mini-reunion at "The Wall" on July 22, 2004. I flew to D.C. on the 21st and met a Band of Brothers unlike any I'd ever known that evening at Chuck Hawkins home.

On the 22nd, we went to "The Wall". I felt that I had so many questions, but upon meeting these men, I seemed to have so few. This perplexed me, but after thinking long and hard about it, I think I know why.

We're all a patchwork quilt of memories and experiences we have in our individual lives. Meeting the soldiers that shared the most intense of experiences with my brother, makes him feel not so far away from me now. Very close, in fact. This is what mattered. The questions were gone.

I want to offer a heartfelt, special thanks to Frank Marshall, for putting this together for me. I can't thank all of you enough. I'm more at peace now with John's death than I've ever been.

Currahee,
David Kreckel

Here are some responses from those that read the letter from David.

Reading that letter from David Kreckel made my day. If the book could bring comfort to someone like David — and lead him to you Alpha Company guys — then we accomplished what we meant to accomplish.

Warmest Regards,
Keith Nolan

Thanks for David Kreckel's letter. It is a wonderful thing to bring that sort of gift to a person's life. Surely it was a healing experience for all of you guys, too. I am of the opinion that that type of action is way more powerful than building a statue in the town square. What will this now free David up to allow into his life?

Friendship, love, intimacy?

A few years ago I had the desire to communicate to the family of a medic who had been killed during my time with C Co. My concern was that I was doing it to make myself feel better and might make the family feel worse in the process. Someone suggested I contact the local newspaper and see if they would intercede to find out if my communication would be welcome. They did and it was. Had a long phone conversation with the guy's mother and ended up writing a Veterans Day piece for the paper.

It is great that David stepped forward. I wonder how many others would benefit from a completion experience like the one you provided him.

Way to go, all of you!
Jeff Wilcox

INCOMING MAIL

Frankie:

What a wonderful letter and a wonderful opportunity for the brother of a deceased comrade to visit with the men who were there when his brother died. It is stories like this that make us all realize how great it is to have the Ripcord Association and the friendship of the many great men in it.

Jim Campbell

Frank

I was impressed by the Ripcord Association people and banquet. You guys and ladies have got it organized pretty good.

I sure appreciated the warm welcome that I received. It was nice to put faces with names of B company guys.

Thanks again
Don Thies
B Company 2/506
Nov 70 Aug 71

Frank

During the siege of FSB Ripcord was there at any time any IPSD units? Someone on another VN Vets forum said his Dad was at Ripcord with a scout dog unit. He also stated that his Dad was an anti-sniper...never heard of such a thing but who knows since I'm sure NVA snipers took shots at the Ripcord defenders and maybe his Dad was a spotter who tried to pin-point the snipers location. Anyway.. If you could let me know about any dog units and their handlers I would appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Bill "Frisbee" Farnie
D/1/506
101 Abn
RVN 68'-69'
william.farnie@siemens.com

Frank

My name is Bob Muhlhauser and I was an Arty. Recon Sgt. with A Co.2/506 April thur May and C Co.2/506 during most of July of 70. My unit was B Btry 2/319th FA. I just recently learned of the Assn. and would like to become a member. Would you please send me info.

Thank You.

PS: Even though I was a Redleg and proud of it, I have always felt fortunate to have served with the grunts 2/506. Some of the best men I ever met!

Bob Muhlhauser
rjgjmuhlhauser@netzero.net

I am requesting information on becoming a member of Ripcord Association. I was a member of A / 159th Avn. Bn. from March 1970 to March 1971.

My association with the battle started with my first mission, when I was part of a flight that inserted some of the first artillery into the base. On

1 July I was the pilot of the CH47 from A Co. that was shot down while flying ammunition to the base. Later I spent a long night dropping flares over one of the night engagements.

Although my contribution to the battle was small I have always taken pride in what I had the opportunity to do. Any information you could send me would be greatly appreciated.

Richard L. Frazer
rlfrazer@yahoo.com

Frank,

Bill Laurie here, grateful recipient of RIPCORD newsletter. See this website for info on recent conference regarding Viet Nam, news media performance(?), comparison to Iraq, etc. all at ***www.viet-myths.net***. This website is staying up and will be a means by which SE Asia veterans (Laos, Cambodia, Viet Nam and Thailand) can express their views on all above and more. Suffice it to say sponsor of this conference was fed up to the teeth about inability of this country to understand what happened in VN. Get back with me if you have any questions.

Keep up the great work on RIPCORD newsletter.

Bill Laurie

Frank

This picture was taken by a young marine named Jonathan Graham. He is the son of a friend of mine and is stationed at Forward Operational Base Kalsu outside the town of Al Iskandariyah in the province of Babil.

Currahee!
Fred Shuttleworth

Tommy Counts, Delta Co. 2/506

Tommy grew up in Columbia, Tennessee about 50 miles south west of Nashville. While attending Columbia Central High School he probably didn't think too much about the army or the draft until graduation in 1968. He soon discovered that others had been thinking of him because he was drafted and shipped off to Fort Campbell Kentucky for basic training sooner than he imagined. This was followed up with Advanced Infantry Training in the "semi-tropical paradise' known as Fort Polk.

By February 1970 Counts had arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to Delta 2/506 of the 101st Airmobile Division at Camp Evans. His platoon leader was Lt. Anderson and his squad leaders were Stanley Diehl and Mark Skinner. Stanley was killed by a mortar round after exiting a helicopter that landed on Ripcord.

(L-R) George Kitzmiller, Tommy Counts, John Mason.

In the picture we see a young Tommy Counts with two of his best squad buddies. One, George Kitzmiller was from West Virginia and opened a business in Miami, Florida after returning home. John Mason is the other and hailed from Maryland. However, Counts has not been able to contact him since the war.

Delta Company and Counts walked over hills and ridges around and on Firebase Ripcord in search of enemy troops until the battle for the hill started in earnest during July. During this dangerous period Delta and Charlie Company assaulted Hill 1000. Later the two companies teamed up to relieve D 1/506 and recover the body of Captain Workman near hill 605.

Tommy Counts now.

Finally Delta walked in to relieve and extract the badly mauled A 2/506 on July 23, 1970. Tommy recalls meeting Frank Marshall of Alpha for the first time during that last relief assignment because Frank said something to the effect of, "I'm from Philly". That has stayed with Tommy ever since.

As a SP4 and grunt, Tommy felt fortunate to have served with the members of the Delta Raiders under the command of Captain Rollison. In his opinion Rollison was an excellent company commander and the reason many of the Delta Raiders are alive today.

Counts spent a few more months in the field following Ripcord and then was assigned his "best job in Vietnam" as the assistant to Chaplain Fox until he returned to the states in February 1971.

Since returning to the states, Tommy has been in the billiard business. For a period of time he was a tournament pool player. However, presently he lives in the Columbia, Tennessee area where he owns and operates a Shooters Sports Bar and Grill.

He married his one and only wife, Judy in the 70's and they produced three children, Lisa, Leslie and Tommy Jr. In turn their children have presented them with grandchildren Blake, James and Julie.

Tommy says there were many great guys in Delta Company and he wishes more would attend the reunions so they could discuss the many memories. Counts can usually be found at the reunions seeking other Delta Raiders and enjoying the fellowship of other Ripcord survivors.

2004 Reunion Expenses

Flowers	$ 291.50
Picnic	288.31
Vans for Picnic	542.93
Gas for vans	80.00
Hospitality Room	1,431.87
Banquet	3,129.46
Bar	68.90
John Wayne Tickets	225.00
Total	**$ 6,057.97**

Income

Haircuts by Mike Chiarelli	$ 135.73
Banquet Raffle	480.00
50/50 Raffle	150.00
Blanket Raffle	365.00
Ladies Raffle	1,146.00
Checks and Cash	2,550.00
Total	**$ 4,826.73**

RIPCORDETTE'S CORNER

Hello to all of our Ripcordettes and their families. We missed everyone who couldn't attend and hopefully we will see you all next year.

Thank you to all of you that provided such wonderful items for our auction this year. We were able to raise $1146.00 with the auction, $365.00 with the mink blanket, and $150.00 on the 50/50 drawing. The grand total of $1661.00 going back into the association.

Lastly, I want to give many thanks to Uwe and Diana Meyer's for inviting everyone to their farm and providing us all with a wonderful dinner and to Red for everything she does before and after the reunions.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in July 2005! Remember, it's not too early to start on your goodies for next years auction.

Jenne Santiago
jenne30@earthlink.net

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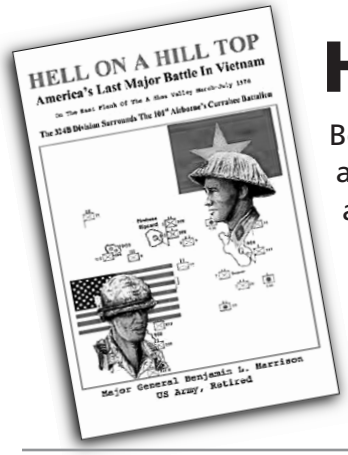

Hell On A Hill Top

Ben Harrison's book, ***Hell On A Hill Top***, will be available for ordering from Fred Spaulding after November 30, 2004.
Paperback $19.95 and Hardcover $29.95.
It will help the association if you buy the book from Fred, no tax and shipping is free.
You can see the book on *www.iuniverse.com* and *BarnesandNoble.com*

RIPCORD REPORT

Ripcord Report is a publication of the ***Ripcord Association***, and is the authoritative voice of history for the Battle of Fire Support Base Ripcord.

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